

# NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

## CHARACTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Much of Point Reyes National Seashore retains its natural character, but most of the land in GGNRA has been altered by man in some way. Coastal defense installations have reshaped much of the shoreline and have introduced many new species of trees and shrubs. On the San Francisco side there remains only a few hundred feet of original bay shoreline. Waterfront areas such as Aquatic Park and Crissy Field are in fact constructed out into the bay on large landfills. In the Marin areas of GGNRA most of the parklands have historically been grazed or cut over since the days of early Spanish habitation. Through the years, only a few areas like Muir Woods have been spared some form of economic utilization.

Fortunately, most of these past uses have neither compromised the spectacular visual qualities of these parklands nor reduced their potential for recreational opportunities. In fact, the park characteristics we enjoy today and perhaps assume to be natural are, in most cases, the result of some degree of human intervention with natural processes. Most of the trees at Baker Beach and Lands End, for example, were planted by the army, and the steep open grasslands so characteristic of coastal Marin may have been in some measure perpetuated by livestock grazing. To maintain these qualities as we know them may require continued intervention or management.

Even natural settings such as Muir Woods and Point Reyes will require some manipulation of the environment to assure that future generations of visitors will be able to enjoy them. In the future, careful management will also be needed to protect areas such as campgrounds and trails from overuse. Campgrounds, for example, may have to be relocated from time to time.

## PROPOSED MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Different landscapes invite different experiences. For example, the Monterey cypress trees at Baker Beach provide shelter from the wind and an excellent setting for picnicking. The following types of landscapes will be favored, and the park staff will develop a plan of management actions to maintain these various settings. First consideration should always be given to native species for any new plantings in the park.

The natural appearance of Ocean Beach, Fort Funston, East and West Fort Miley, Lands End, and Baker Beach will be maintained. Wooded areas from the Golden Gate Bridge to the Cliff House will be

protected, and wherever possible along the ocean shoreline the dune environment will be restored. These lands will continue to have a relatively natural character, but intensive management actions such as reforestation of the Monterey cypress stands may be required to preserve wooded areas. This part of the park will attract people seeking closer contact with nature within the city.

Crissy Field, Fort Mason, Aquatic Park, Alcatraz, and Sutro Heights Park will be developed and managed as urban park settings, with special attention given to preserving the historic character of many of these areas. Sutro Park, for example, will have its traditional formal gardens partially restored, and Crissy Field will receive new turf areas and tree planting for wind protection and recreational activities. These areas should draw the most people and will be intensively managed to encourage a variety of park programs and activities.

The GGNRA land in Marin County south of Olema Valley will be managed to preserve a diversity of settings. The mosaic coastal scrub and prairie will be maintained. To achieve this may require a prescribed program of mowing, grazing, and burning. It is particularly important that grasslands be maintained or even expanded near facilities in the Marin Headlands and along access roads to encourage casual uses of open space.

Muir Woods will be managed to protect and interpret the large redwood trees. To do this will require continued intervention in the normal ecological succession of the forest. This may involve, for example, the planting of new trees and the selective thinning of old stands, or even prescribed burning.

The pastoral landscape of the northern Olema Valley reflects the important role that dairying has played in the cultural history of the valley. This area will be managed to preserve the visual contrast between woodland and open grassland so characteristic of a pastoral setting.

Most of Point Reyes National Seashore is either legally designated as wilderness or is under lease or permit for grazing purposes in accordance with its enabling legislation. Within the legal and administrative constraints imposed by these two designations, the unusual variety of scenic qualities and biotic communities that make the seashore attractive to scientists as well as recreationists will be aggressively maintained. Although the majority of the seashore is generally viewed as a wild area where natural processes are allowed to predominate, manipulation of those processes through methods such as selective thinning, burning, and mowing will be cautiously pursued when necessary to protect its scenic, ecological, and recreational values. Restoration of historic natural conditions (such as reestablishment of Tule elk) will continue to be implemented when such actions will not seriously diminish scenic and recreational values.